ANNUAL REPORT 2005

Cristina M. Pumplun, Secretary of Studies

1. Study and research at the Thomas Instituut te Utrecht

At the beginning of the year under review, i.e. on 18 February 2005, the Thomas Instituut te Utrecht organised a book-symposium on the occasion of the publication of the eleventh volume of the series Publications of the Thomas Instituut te Utrecht: Barbara Roggema, Marcel Poorthuis, Pim Valkenberg (eds.), The Three Rings. Textual Studies in the historical triologue of Judaism, Christianity and Islam (Leuven/Peeters 2005). Ninety people attended this event, which took place at the ‘Boothzaal’ in the brand new building of the Utrecht university library, opposite the Thomas Instituut. Prof.dr. Judith Frishman (KTU), prof.dr. Nasr Abû Zayd (University for Humanistics, Utrecht) and prof. dr. Peter Nissen (Radboud University Nijmegen) discussed several questions, including: in respect of your personal faith, how do you value the common legacy in the Netherlands summarized by ‘the three rings’ at this day and age? Are there essential viewpoints in your religious tradition against the risk of repeating denunciations of the past? Which aspects of your religious tradition refer to a common approach which – in our days – is not feasible anymore but which – as a testimony of the Abrahamitic forum – would contribute to modern society? A lively discussion concluded this book-symposium.

Members of the research group Onderzoeksgroep Thomas van Aquino convened seven times in 2005, each time on the first Monday of the month. Parts of dissertations by junior research fellows were discussed, as well as preliminary versions of papers that would later be presented at the conference of the institute in December. A number of meetings were spent on reading texts by Thomas Aquinas and on the preparation of the forthcoming conference.
2. Research program 2005-2010

At the end of 2004, the first research program of the Thomas Instituut te Utrecht “The theology of Thomas Aquinas, its sources and its influence on subsequent theology” was concluded. In 2005, dr. Henk Schoot and prof. dr. Herwi Rikhof launched a new programme under the title: “The hidden presence of God in Scripture and Sacrament in the context of Thomas Aquinas”, which concentrates on Thomas Aquinas and on the subjects of scripture and sacrament.

In its current form, the programme is a continuation of earlier research into the theology of Thomas and the reception of his theology, which – over the years – has developed increasingly into a program that concentrates on the theology of Thomas and its relevance for current theological discussions. Therefore, in the new program Thomas’ theology is studied in view of its contribution to these discussions. The field of research is the theology of Thomas Aquinas. The guiding principle is systematic theological and canonical juridical in character. The overall theme of the hidden presence of God is studied in four related projects and is related to the methodical features that have become characteristic of the ‘Utrecht’ approach: attention to language, to negative theology of Thomas, to the biblical nature of his thought and to the nexus mysteriorum.

The program includes the following main projects:
- Theology of the Trinity: a reading of Thomas in relation to the current renaissance of the theology of the Trinity;
- The God of the medieval Arabic philosophers: doctrine of God in view of the inter-religious dialogue;
- Christ-revelation and the religions: Christology in view of the medieval inter-religious dialogue;
- Sacrament and creation: the sacramental presence of God in marriage, sacrament and creation (this is a interdisciplinary project of systematic theology and canon law).

Two PhD-projects are related to this:
- Thomas’s commentary on John;
The *Pugio Fidei* (a key publication in the inter-religious dialogue in the 13th century).

Three external PhD-projects are also linked to the main projects of the programme: two deal with sacramental theology – especially the Eucharist – and one deals with the doctrine of God and the *imago Dei*.

Every five years, an international conference is organised, during which the topics of the programme are presented to and discussed with an international forum. National and international recognition of the quality of the institute and its research is expressed in the invitation to members, who are invited to contribute to books and conferences, to give guest-lectures and conduct summer courses, to act as editors in various editorial boards or to become a visiting scholar.

The Thomas Foundation has acquired funds for establishing a chair for the study of the theology of Thomas Aquinas. The holder of this chair, be it part time and be it probably for a limited period of time, will be able to raise the profile of the programme.

The various research projects give the opportunity for interdisciplinary discussions, both within the institute and within a broader academic setting, including areas discussing the relationship of systematic theology – exegesis, Christianity-Judaism, theology – philosophy, (medieval) history.

### 3. Conference 2005

From 15 to 17 December 2005 inclusive, the *Thomas Instituut te Utrecht* organised its third international conference at the ISVW conference centre at Leusden (Holland) near Utrecht. Fifty participants from twelve countries (Belgium, Canada, Germany, Ireland, Italy, Iran, Malta, Netherlands, Poland, USA, UK and Switzerland) discussed the issue of “Divine Transcendence and Immanence in the Thought of Thomas Aquinas” during this three-day conference.

An influential, but rather debatable interpretation of Thomas Aquinas’ lasting cultural contribution focuses on the distinction between the natural and the supernatural. Such a distinction may serve the interests of human autonomy, human rationality, the development of the sciences and the dialogue with non-Christian partners. But it may serve to marginalize church and religion in
response to important cultural forces, and to deeply secularize human understanding of the ‘self’ and of society.

Over the past decades, however, both philosophers and theologians have formulated an interpretation of Aquinas that is quite different. It focuses on the Christian and theological thrust of Aquinas’ authorship, and is in search of both God’s presence and absence in our world. There is no absolute, clear-cut opposition or simple contrast between God and the human world, nor can God be reduced to a human world. This is a negative formula. How can we best approach this negative formula? Are there any sound strategies to elucidate this formula and what would those strategies entail? How can Aquinas help us recognize and interpret God’s presence in our own world?

During the conference, scholars from different backgrounds and disciplines faced the challenge. For this, four subject areas had been selected: Aquinas’ understanding of God, his teaching on creation and on grace and life eternal, and his approach to Christ and his sacraments. The programme provided four clusters of key lectures, which were followed by papers, related to the same subject-areas.

The conference was officially opened in the afternoon by the director of the Thomas Instituut te Utrecht, Herwi Rikhof. Following this, Conor Cunningham (Nottingham) presented the first key lecture on the basis of the topic of recollection. In addition to Cunningham’s originally platonic understanding of recollection, Rudi Te Velde (Amsterdam-Tilburg) juxtaposed this with another platonic element: he proposed an understanding of participation which may help to resolve the dichotomy of transcendence and immanence in relation to God. During the evening, three parallel sessions were held, each with two papers in connection with the topic of the doctrine of God. Various presenters from Europe and one from Iran entered into a lively discussion.

The second day of the conference was started with two papers on Aquinas’ theology of creation. Gregory Rocca (Berkeley) elaborated on the topic of creatio ex nihilo as a key to unlock transcendence and immanence, while Harm Goris (Utrecht) discussed God’s omnipresence. Aquinas’ theology of creation was also the theme of the three following parallel sessions.
In the afternoon, key-lectures focussed on ‘Christ and his sacraments’. The first lecture was held by Bruce Marshall (Dallas). He showed in which way Thomas’ Christology and his understanding of Israel communicate. After that Henk Schoot (Utrecht) discussed the doctrine of redemption: Thomas’ understanding of satisfaction is determined by his understanding of love. Cardinal Simonis of the archdiocese of Utrecht attended this paper and expressed his appreciation for the sound Thomas research as the topic of this conference.

In the evening, the conference party moved to the new Utrecht university library, where Emile Ramakers (Maastricht) presented a paper on the oldest images of Thomas’ life, a fresco, which is in Maastricht. Following this, the conference party attended a guided tour of the university building and a presentation during which Hans Mulder, the Conservator of Rare Imprints, introduced the key treasures of one of the oldest university libraries in the Netherlands.

The third and last day of the conference was started with three parallel sessions on the theme of ‘Christ and his sacraments’. In each session a (junior) researcher of the Thomas Instituut entered into discussion with a participant from the United States.

Ensuing, Hans-Christian Schmidbaur (Lugano) gave a paper on friendship of God and the image of God in Thomas’ thinking, while Herwi Rikhof (Utrecht) showed in his paper – which included both scriptural commentary and Thomas’ systematic works on adoptive sonship – that Thomas interprets this as in a thoroughly trinitarian way. This part of the conference on the theme of ‘Grace and Life eternal’ was complemented by two parallel sessions with speakers from Poland, the USA and Italy.

A plenary session concluded the afternoon, with the eight keynote speakers chaired by David Burrell (Notre Dame), looking back at the conference. The exchange of many different approaches and fields of research and the discussions held from theological, philosophical and historical perspectives, was experienced as encouraging and enriching. They took away many blind spots. In addition to Thomas Aquinas, also other church fathers, teachers and theologians appeared to have been topics of discussions. Both participants and organisers observed that all expectations had been met. The excellent atmosphere and the quality of
the open way in which discussions were held had even surpassed the expectations of many participants.

Preparations are being made for a book in which edited versions of the plenary sessions and a number of other contributions will be published. Some contributions to the conference are published in this *Jaarboek Thomas Instituut te Utrecht* 2005.

### 4. The Board of the Institute and the Foundation

Most of the issues that have been mentioned above were discussed in a meeting of the Board of the Institute, which convened on 14 April. There were no changes to the composition of the Board of the Institute.

The Board of the Thomas Foundation convened on 12 April and on 9 December. The Board discussed the requests for financial support and concentrated on the preparations for the establishment of a chair extraordinary for research into Thomas’ theology at the *Thomas Instituut te Utrecht*.

### 5. *Jaarboek Thomas Instituut te Utrecht*

The *Jaarboek Thomas Instituut te Utrecht* 2004 was timely published in 2005. The Editorial Board convened on 5 April and 17 November. There were no personnel changes in the Editorial Board.

### 6. Series of Publications

In the year under review, the eleventh volume was published in the series of the institute: Barbara Roggema, Marcel Poorthuis, Pim Valkenberg (eds.) *The Three Rings - Textual Studies in the historical triadology of Judaism, Christianity and Islam*, Publications of the Thomas Instituut te Utrecht, Volume XI, Leuven/Peeters 2005, 297 pp. The book was presented at a symposium on 18 February.
7. **Members of the Thomas Instituut te Utrecht**

31 December 2005

*Catholic Theological University Utrecht*

Staff  
Prof. dr. P. van Geest  
Dr. H.J.M.J. Goris  
Prof. dr. H.W.M. Rikhof  
Dr. H.J.M. Schoot  
Dr. A.M.G. Van den Bossche  
Prof. dr. F.J.H. Vosman  
Prof. dr. J.B.M. Wissink

Candidates for a Doctorate  
Drs. S. Mangnus  
Drs. F.A. Steijger  
Drs. S. Wiersma

*Tilburg Faculty of Theology*

Staff  
Prof. dr. K.-W. Merks  
Prof. dr. R.A. te Velde  
(University of Amsterdam, Philosophy)

*Catholic University of Nijmegen*

Staff  
Dr. P.J.J.M. Bakker (Philosophy)  
Prof. dr. H.A.G. Braakhuis (Philosophy)  
Dr. C.J.W. Leget (UMC St. Radboud, Ethics)  
Prof. dr. P.J.M. van Tongeren (Philosophy)  
Prof. dr. P.G.J.M. Raeds (History)  
Dr. W.G.B.M. Valkenberg (Theology)  
Dr. A.C.M. Vennix (Philosophy)  
Prof. dr. mr. B.P.M. Vermeulen (Law)
8. Research programmes and research projects in 2005

The projects referred to are carried out by members of the institute. The research programmes consist of several projects.

*The hidden presence of God in Scripture and Sacraments seen in the light of Thomas Aquinas*  
(Catholic Theological University of Utrecht)

*The God of the Medieval Arabic Philosophers*  
-H.J.M.J. Goris

"Ut credentes vitam habeatis": Faith in Thomas Aquinas’ In Ioannem  
-S. Mangnus

*The Mystery of the Trinity*  
-H.W.M. Rikhof

*Christ-Revelation and the Religions*  
-H.J.M. Schoot

*God’s Hidden Presence in the Sacrament*  
-F.A. Steijger
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The Concept of Trinity and Reconstruction of Identity in Christian Theology of Interreligious Dialogue (also part of the research programme of the Faculty of Theology at the Catholic University of Nijmegen, entitled: ‘Religious identity interactions in a plural and secularized society’)
-W.G.B.M. Valkenberg

Sacrament and Creation
-A.M.G. Van den Bossche
The meaning of the term ‘passion’ (and its connotations) in handbooks of moral theology
-F.J.H. Vosman
The Pugio Fidei by Raimundus Martini (1220-1284)
-S. Wiersma

Transcendence and Transcendentals
(Tilburg Faculty of Theology)

Current meaning of Aquinas’ ethics
-K.-W. Merks
Metaphysics in Aquinas and the Thomist tradition
-R.A. te Velde

Individual projects
Gabriel Biel, a devout theologian. Research into the interrelatedness of spirituality of the Devotio Moderna and academic theology in the work of Gabriel Biel
-P. van Geest
Den Tod im Leben sehen. Martin Luthers Beitrag zu einem erneuerten Umgang mit Tod und Sterben in unserer Zeit
-S. Gradl
Spirituality in palliative care
-C.J.W. Leget
Subject and normativity (programme)
-P.J.M. van Tongeren
The question of the eternity of the world in Thomas Aquinas, Bonaventure, Siger of Brabant and Boethius of Dacia
-P.L. van Veldhuijsen
Design of a Practical Ecclesiology
-J.B.M. Wissink
9. Publications in 2005

This list contains all publications by members of the Thomas Instituut in so far as they include Thomas Aquinas as a topic or a topic in relation to his life and works. It also contains all publications by members whose research has been located at the Thomas Instituut.

Scientific publications


Van den Bossche, A.M.G. - From the Other’s Point of View. The challenge of Jean-Luc Marion’s Phenomenology to Theology - L. Boeve, Y. de Maeseneer, S. Van den Bossche (eds.), Religious Experience and Contemporary Theological Epistemology (Bibliotheca Ephemeridum Theologicarum Lovaniensium CLXXXVIII), Leuven/Peeters-Leuven University Press (2005) 61-82


Velde, R.A. te - De begeerte naar weten: Thomas en Bonaventura over de Boom der Kennis - Timo Slootweg (ed.), In de schaduw van de Boom der Kennis - Budel/Damon (2005) 71-89


Professional and/or popular publications


Merks, K.W. - Von ‘multikultureller’ Toleranz zu ‘interkultureller’ Verständigung - cienewsletter 1 (September 2005) 1-2


Van den Bossche, A.M.G. - “U hebt het mij gegeven, aan U Heer, geef ik het terug” (GO 234). Over de Kerk als bouwsteen van de ignatiaanse spiritualiteit - Cardoner (2005/1) 20-29

Van den Bossche, A.M.G. - De bijbel in het huwelijk - Rondom Gezin 26 (2005/2) 66-77


Academic lectures

Geest, P.J.J. van - De Regel van Augustinus - Lecture at the ‘Soeterbeeck-Leergang’, Soeterbeeck/Radboud University Nijmegen, 28 May 2005

Geest, P.J.J. van - Augustinus over vriendschap - Lecture at the ‘Oude Abdij’ Drongen, 22 August 2005

Geest, P.J.J. van - Augustine’s thoughts on how God may be represented - Paper read at the conference ‘Iconoclash. Struggle for Research Identity. Second Conference of Church Historians Utrecht’, Utrecht, 24 August 2005

Goris, H.J.M.J. - Theology of the Word in Aquinas and Augustine - Paper read at the conference ‘Aquinas the Augustinian’, Ave Maria University, Naples (Florida), 4 February 2005


Merks, K.W. - Die theologische Bedeutung des säkularen Staates - Lecture at the symposium ‘Die Rolle der Religion in Recht und politischer Ordnung heute’, Bamberg, 2 July 2005

Rikhof, H.W.M. - Towards a new Dutch late modern devotion. A reflection on a painting - Paper read at a meeting of American Academics, Utrecht, 6 June 2005

Rikhof, H.W.M. - Thomas at Utrecht - Paper read at the conference Letture e Interpretazioni di Tomasso d’Aquino Oggi: Cantieri Aperti, Milan, 13 September 2005


Steijger, F. - Transubstantiation in discussion - Lecture at the conference ‘Divine Transcendence and Immanence in the Thought of Thomas Aquinas’, Leusden, 16 December 2005


Velde, R.A. te - De actualiteit van de mythe vanuit het premoderne perspectief: Augustinus en Thomas - Lecture at the Erasmus University Rotterdam, 10 April 2005

Velde, R.A. te - Katholiek in een postchristelijke cultuur - Lecture at the University of Amsterdam, 24 November 2005

Velde, R.A. te - Anselmus - Guestlecture at the seminar on History of Philosophy, International School of Philosophy (ISVW), Leusden, 27 November 2005
Velde, R.A. te - Over het persoonzijn van God - Lecture at the day of studies of the Dutch Society for Philosophy of Religion, 2 December 2005


Wiersma, S. - The Doctrine of the Trinity in Raymundus Martini’s *Pugio Fidei* - Lecture at the conference ‘Divine Transcendence and Immanence in the Thought of Thomas Aquinas’, Leusden, 15 December 2005